



**BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

TO: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Members

FROM: Thanh Dang, Public Works Planner

DATE: May 27, 2011

RE: Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee Meeting Summary for Monday May 23, 2011

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee will meet on Monday May 23, 2011 at 6:00pm in the Community Development classroom, 409 South Main Street, Harrisonburg. Meetings are always open to the public and citizens are encouraged to attend.

Members present included: Thomas Jenkins, Len Van Wyk, Charles Chenault, Paul Johnston, and Carl Droms.

Advisory members, and guests present included: Thanh Dang (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works), Lee Eschelman (JMU), Officer Daniel Claxton (Police), Dan Fadula (Parks & Rec), Nicolas Detweiller-Stoddard (citizen), Tom Benevento (citizen), and Misty Tilson (citizen).

1. Introduction – New Subcommittee member

Mr. Jenkins introduced Mr. Droms who replaces Lara Mack as a new member of the subcommittee. Mr. Droms has been active in the local bicycling community since about 2000.

2. Bicycle Friendly Community Award, Bronze Designation!

Mr. Jenkins announced that the City of Harrisonburg has received a Bronze Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists. He reviewed that in 2010 the City received an honorable mention and was elevated to Bronze designation for its many recent efforts following the adoption of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan last year. He encouraged everyone to keep the momentum going.

The City of Harrisonburg is 1 of 5 Virginia localities to receive a Bicycle Friendly Community Designation. Arlington has Silver, and Alexandria, Charlottesville, and Roanoke also have Bronze designation.

Mr. Jenkins thanked everyone's contribution to the application. Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Williams and Ms. Dang specifically for their efforts.

3. Bluestone Trail Update

Ms. Dang updated the subcommittee that the project has changed direction since the last Subcommittee meeting. Earlier this month, the City hired Rich Edwards, trail specialist with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) who also lives in Harrisonburg, to provide consultation services on the alignment and design of the Bluestone Trail. A kick off meeting was held on May 12 with Mr. Edwards, Parks & Recreation, Public Works, and city engineering staff.

Ms. Dang added that Mr. Edwards will talk with the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition regarding outreach to the Georges Hatchery for potential trail alignment on their property. City staff will be coordinating with property managers of Pheasant Run and continue coordination with James Madison University.

Mr. Johnson asked if there had been any past discussions with Georges. Ms. Dang said that years ago while the Friends of Blacks Run Greenway was working on the Greenway Master Plan that they and Mr. Edwards had talked with Bob Wolfe from Georges and Georges was supportive of a trail concept at that time.

4. Trail Lighting Standard

Ms. Dang presented that with design of both the Bluestone Trail (by City) and Northend Greenway (by New Community Project) underway that a trail lighting standard or guidance is needed. There have been preliminary discussions between Subcommittee members through email and it was the consensus of the Subcommittee that trail function as a transportation corridor is important and trail users should be able to use the trails at night. Therefore trail lighting is needed. The question is how much lighting?

Ms. Dang has done preliminary research on other communities and was unable to find a trail lighting standard, although general guidance exists.

Subcommittee members expressed concern that a strict lighting standard could inhibit the construction of future trails if the trail was unable to meet that lighting requirement. Mr. Williams responded that the standard should be flexible enough not to derail future trail projects.

There was some discussion about lights being on motion sensors, discussion about how existing street lights operated, and the relationship between the City and Harrisonburg Electric Commission (HEC). It may be difficult to have motion sensor lights and possibly not necessary. Generally, HEC owns street lights and the city pays for them similar to a lease.

City staff has already contacted Brian O'Dell at HEC for assistance, and it was suggested that City staff continue working with HEC to develop a draft proposal and will report back to the Subcommittee at its next meeting.

5. 2011 Paving Schedule

Ms. Dang presented the 2011 Paving Schedule (see Attachment A).

The following streets had sharrows installed this year. Ms. Dang added that these markings were partially funded by the DR 100 donation to the City.

- South Main Street: Cantrell Avenue to Campbell Street
- South Dogwood Drive: Maryland Avenue to Hidden Creek Lane
- Hidden Creek Lane: S. Dogwood Drive to S. High Street

Installation of sharrows on these streets have started and/or will be completed this year.

- North Dogwood Drive: W. Market Street to S. High Street
- Park Road: W. Dogwood Drive to Birch Drive
- Market Street: High Street to Mason Street

The following streets will have bike lanes installed this year:

- South Avenue from South Main Street to South High Street (after paving)

Mr. Williams added that rising fuel prices could push some streets schedule for paving to next year.

Additionally, the City is not paving the section of South Main Street between Pleasant Hill Road and Mosby Road due to construction of Stone Spring Road in that area. Instead, paving will take place on South Main Street between Mosby Road and Pleasant Valley Road this year. Mr. Williams explained that when South Main Street was constructed years ago by the state highway department that the pavement width was reduced in this section and therefore the City will be unable to stripe bike lanes on this section. However, when the City paves between Pleasant Hill Road and Mosby Road, that section will have bike lanes.

Mr. Jenkins asked if sharrows will be painted on Carlton Street after paving this year. Ms. Dang said that was accidentally omitted and that yes, sharrows will be added there as indicated on the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.

6. Brief update, if any, on following projects:

a. Chicago Avenue/ Mt. Clinton Pike Study Update

Mr. Williams updated the Subcommittee that tomorrow night he will be giving City Council an update on the project. He stated that there were 108 citizens who came to the Public Meeting in April, and 91 written comments have been received. The public comment period officially ended on May 20.

Mr. Williams described some of the concepts presented to the public and that will be presented to City Council. There are multiple intersection reconfiguration scenarios for (a) Chicago Avenue and Waterman Drive, and (b) Chicago Avenue, Mount Clinton Pike, and Park Road. Both locations have a roundabout alternative scenario that received significant citizen support.

Mr. Johnson asked what size these roundabouts would be compared to the roundabout at Linda Lane and Smithland Road. Mr. Williams responded that these roundabouts would be similarly sized, but a may be a little larger. Mr. Williams added that the roundabouts would help to maintain the character of the neighborhood, and that comments received from citizens expressed the same idea.

More information on the project can be found at www.ChicagoAvenue.org.

b. Thomas Harrison Middle School shared use path

Mr. Jenkins said he mailed letters to the homeowners of 1022 and 1032 Wyndham Drive explaining the City's interest in constructing a path on the city property between their homes to connect the Wyndham Woods neighborhood with Thomas Harrison Middle School and Route 33. The letters would have been received by the property owners around last Monday. If after some time has passed Mr. Jenkins does not receive any response from the property owners he will try to contact them again.

Mr. Jenkins recapped that a few months ago he had contact Mr. Dennis Vondrak who lives at the end of Wyndham Drive. At that time, Mr. Vondrak expressed some concerns, but was not completely against the idea of a trail running along the side of his property.

There was some discussion about Bike to Work Day last Friday and that a lot of teachers and students at Thomas Harrison Middle School rode their bikes to school. It was believe that 175 teachers and students rode their bikes and that overflow bike parking was in the cafeteria.

Ms. Dang noted that there are some new faces around the table and asked if anyone knows people living in this neighborhood to please reach out to them for support of this trail.

Mr. Fadula added that a lot of the students who participate in Parks & Recreation Department programs have told him that they already cut through properties between Wyndham Drive to Thomas Harrison Middle School.

c. HPD Enforcement & Education for cyclists

Mr. Jenkins announced that there have been continued discussions between him and Officer Joe Palaskey about how to improve enforcement and education for cyclists. He described Davis, CA's program of tracking warnings and then enforcing after a number of warnings have been given to violators.

Mr. Jenkins said that he also recently talked to Andy Perrine, Associate VP of Communications and Marketing at James Madison University about including bicycling education as part of freshman orientation and to involve Harrisonburg and JMU Police.

Officer Claxton was introduced and he added that he has been working with other HPD staff on a public relations campaign involving radio and other media. He envisions the campaign to take place over a period of several months, beginning this summer and going through November. The campaign would involve police giving warnings to bicyclists who run red lights and commit other violations, tracking the warnings given out in a computer system, and in November police would institute a zero tolerance policy and give tickets to violators. The Subcommittee responded positively to this campaign. It was discussed that HPD would take the lead on the PR campaign described by Officer Claxton, but that the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition could help also if needed.

d. Bicycling in City Parks

Ms. Dang stated that no activity has occurred on this project and suggested that a workgroup be formed if moving this project ahead was a priority to the Subcommittee. Ms. Dang and Mr. Jenkins provided a brief background on this project: Bicyclists are allowed to ride on the gravel trails in the park. However, not very many people know this, and before we make a big push to encourage people to bike in the park, the Subcommittee wanted to do an assessment of the gravel trails to determine where improvements could be made and/or where bikes should be restricted, if anywhere. There is also a need to educate trail users of trail etiquette and how to share the trail with other users. This might be done through signage at trail heads.

Mr. Fadula offered to ride the trails and conduct the initial assessments and to also coordinate this project between the Subcommittee and Parks & Recreation Department.

e. Safe Routes to School: Stone Spring Elementary School

Work on the School Travel Plan continues and Ms. Dang anticipates applying for the grant in early 2012. At this stage, the SRTS Team made up of parents from the school is working on walkability surveys and other assessments required for the School Travel Plan. The parents have also been asked to contact two property owners where a path is proposed to go between Krammer Court and Peach Grove Avenue.

f. Northend Greenway

Mr. Benevento updated the Subcommittee on the progress of the Northend Greenway. He introduced Nicolas Detweiller-Stoddard as the new fundraising campaign coordinator. New Community Project has been working in 3 primary areas, in addition to fundraising:

- I. Easements. New Community Project has been preparing letters of intent for the property owners whose property the trail is proposed to go through. There are about 20 landowners who will be contacted and there is a local lawyer working with the group on this. Mr. Benevento said that permanent easements would be secured and finalized after construction, but that temporary construction easements would be secured prior to construction.
- II. Engineering. There is a civil engineer and a structural engineer working on the design of the trail. Funding needs to be raised to pay for surveying work. Also, a wetlands study and other environmental permits will also be needed.
- III. Stream Restoration. Mr. Benevento stated that Karl Shank, Brian Wagner, and an intern are working on concepts for stream restoration to be integrated into the project.
- IV. Fundraising. Mr. Detwiller-Stoddard said he had visited with folks in Luray to learn about the Hawksbill Greenway. Fundraising for the Northend Greenway has started, but has not been advertised widely yet to the public. The group is looking to raise larger private donations first, and then will then do a public launch around July. The group hopes for \$300,000 to come from private and public donations from community members, \$200,000 from possible grants, and \$300,000 possibly from the City.

Mr. Benevento added that the group met with 5-6 focus groups of different backgrounds to help develop a public communication plan for the project.

7. Update for projects under design/construction (see Attachment B)

Ms. Dang went over the projects listed in the Attachment.

Mr. Johnson asked if a pedestrian crossing could be installed on Port Republic Road near Hillside Avenue, similar to the one recently installed on Neff Avenue. Staff said they would look into this.

Ms. Dang presented that Mr. Benevento had emailed her a request on behalf of many students and parents attending Waterman Elementary School who have been seeing an increase number of bicyclists going to the school and are concerned about student safety. This request was forwarded by email to Subcommittee members in advance of the meeting. In the email, Mr. Benevento asked how Chicago Avenue could be stripped from Gay Street to near Rockingham Drive as soon as possible and in advance of the Safe Routes to School Waterman project that is currently under design by the City. Mr. Benevento also offered in his email that New Community Project and the Voluntary Gas Tax of Harrisonburg could front money and get reimbursed by the Safe Routes to School Grant.

Ms. Dang responded to the request at the meeting and explained to the group that the following hurdles prevent bike lane striping on Chicago Avenue at this time:

- On Chicago Avenue from Gay St to 2nd Street a loading/unloading area for student drop off and pick up needs to be maintained Chicago Avenue. This loading/unloading area can be accommodated with the addition of bike lanes provided that (a) curb and gutter be installed in a 150 section on the east side of Chicago Avenue just south of 1st Street so we can count it as part of the 5-ft bike lanes, otherwise we cannot install a bike lane there, (b) that the center line get shifted to the east to accommodate the new designated parking area and bike lanes, and (c) that the utility pole get relocated which HEC will do as part of the project. Cross section of the street would be:

(from west to east, school side to Route 42) 2 ft. gutter – 6 ft. parking – 5 ft. bike lane - 11 ft. car travel – 11 ft. car travel – 3 ft. bike lane – 2 ft. gutter

Subcommittee members expressed concern about the 5-ft. bike lane next to the parking area, but Ms. Dang said that there is no additional pavement width to widen the bike lane. Mr. Benevento and Ms. Dang added that in the morning parents dropping off their students do not generally park along the street because they drop their students off and leave. At this same time in the morning, students would be riding their bike to school on this side of the street. In the afternoon, when parents park on the street to wait for the students, students leaving the school would be biking away from the school on the opposite side of the street. There should not be a lot of conflict.

- From 2nd Street to approximately 300 ft. north of 3rd Street, this section is wide enough now to paint bike lanes on, but Ms. Dang recommended not doing anything at this time because (a) it's a short section, and (b) there is major sidewalk and curb & gutter reconstruction planned as part of the SRTS project on the Red Front side of the street which will probably require repainting of the bike lanes if they are installed in advance.
- From 300 ft. north of 3rd Street to Rockingham Drive, the street narrows and the pavement is not wide enough to have 2 vehicular travel lanes and 2 bike lanes (one of each in each direction). Pavement widening is included as part of the SRTS grant and should be done together with the sidewalk construction planned.

Ms. Dang added VDOT must approve plans for the Safe Routes to School project and authorize the City to spend funds if the City wishes to get reimbursed for those funds fronted. Therefore, if New Community Project and Voluntary Gas Tax provides funds to these projects it would not be reimbursable. Additionally, if the Safe Routes to School project was broken into smaller parts and bided separately, the City and community would not achieve the cost savings they would get by bidding all of the work together.

(NOTE: Two new projects were added to the list in Attachment B for your reference. They were accidentally omitted from the list discussed at the meeting. Feel free to contact Thanh Dang if questions.)

Other Business/ Announcements

1. Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition's Business Bike Rack Grant, www.svbcoalition.org/bikerack
2. Valley Conservation Council's Better Development Symposium on May 25, www.valleyconservation.org
3. Safe Routes to School – Keister Elementary School Project Dedication on June 3rd @ 8:45 **AM**, See Attachment C.

Next Meeting: July 23, 2011 at 6pm in the Community Development Classroom, 409 South Main Street

Adjourn

Attachment A : 2011 Paving Schedule

NORTH EAST SECTION:

Street:	From:	To:
Country Club Rd.	Superior Concrete Entr.	East of Linda Ln.
Mason St.	E. Market St.	N. Main St.
Fairway Dr.	Birdie Ct.	Keezletown Rd.
E. Gay St.	Broad St.	Sterling St.
E. Gay St.	Sterling St.	cul-de-sac

NORTH WEST SECTION:

Street:	From:	To:
W. Washington St.	N. Main St.	N. Liberty St.
Noll Dr.	Kratzer Rd.	N. Liberty St.

SOUTH EAST SECTION:

Street:	From:	To:
Carlton St.	E. Market St.	Reservoir St.
E. Market St.	S. Main St.	S. Mason St.
Moffett Terrace	Fairview Ave.	Maplehurst Ave.
Ott St.	E. Market St.	Franklin St.
S. Main St.	Mosby Rd.	Pleasant Valley Rd.
Decca Dr.	Peach Grove Ave.	End of pavement
Gilmer Cr.	Decca Dr.	cul-de-sac
Oak Hill Dr.	Ridgewood Rd.	Forest Hills Rd.
University Blvd.	Driver Dr.	Reservoir St.
Lois Ln.	Peach Grove Ave.	Devon Ln.

SOUTH WEST SECTION:

Street:	From:	To:
Bruce St.	S. Main St.	S. Liberty St.
Laurel St.	Central Ave.	cul-de-sac
South Ave.	S. Main St.	S. High St.
Southampton	Central Ave.	Southampton
Willow Hills Dr.	Pleasant Hill Rd.	House #1981
Wyndam Woods Cr.	Circle Dr.	Wyndam Woods Cr.
Wyndam Dr.	Wyndam Woods Cr.	End of pavement

Attachment B: Update on City Projects under design and construction

For the May 23, Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee meeting. *Italicized projects had been accidentally omitted from the meeting, but are added here for your reference.*

PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- Safe Routes to School: Keister Elementary – Construct sidewalks on South Avenue between S. Dogwood Drive and S. Main Street, Central Avenue between South Avenue and Southhampton Drive, and Maryland Avenue between S. High Street and Chestnut Drive. Includes pedestrian signals. Estimate cost: >\$450,000. Funded by VDOT SRTS Program and city funds.
 - UPDATE: Project under construction by Contracting Unlimited. Construction is near completion. Completion date is May 31, 2011. A ceremony will be held on June 3 at 8:45am. Invitations forthcoming.
- East Market Street Sidewalk Phase II – Construct a 10-ft wide sidewalk with 5-ft grass strip on north side of East Market Street between Spotswood Shopping Center entrance and Linda Lane. Estimated cost: <\$184,000. Funded by VDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program.
 - UPDATE: Contractor, A&J Development and Excavation has completed project. Replacement trees to be planted in Fall 2011.
- Neff Avenue Crossing – crossing from trailhead of Arboretum trail to opposite side of Neff Avenue, includes construction of ADA ramp, installation of crosswalks and flashing pedestrian crossing warning lights and signage. Funded by city.
 - UPDATE: This project has been completed.
- *Sharrows and Bike Lanes Installation for 2011- See description in agenda item #5.*
- *West Washington Street – Construct sidewalks on West Washington Street from existing sidewalk at bridge over Blacks Run to North Liberty Street. Estimate construction cost: \$114,000. Funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)*
 - *UPDATE: This project is out for bid and bids are to be received and opened on May 24, 2011. Project construction will begin in early June.*

PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN

- Bluestone Trail Phase I – Construct a 10-ft wide shared use path between Port Republic Road at Bluestone Drive to Stone Spring Road across from RMH Wellness Center. Estimated cost: >\$600,000. No funding yet available.
 - UPDATE: The City has hired Rich Edwards/International Mountain Bicycling Association to provide consultation services on the concept plan and design of the trail. A kick off meeting with Rich Edwards and staff from Public Works, Parks & Recreation, and City engineer's office was held on May 12, 2011.

- East Market Street Sidewalk Phase III – Construct a 5-ft wide sidewalk with 3-ft grass strip on south side of East Market Street between University Boulevard and Evelyn Byrd Avenue. Estimated cost: >\$212,000. Funded by VDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program.
 - UPDATE: Project is currently under design by city staff. Construction anticipated to begin in Spring 2012.
- Safe Routes to School: Waterman Elementary School – Sidewalks on west side of Chicago Avenue between 2nd Street and Rockingham Drive, bike lanes on Chicago Avenue between Gay Street and Rockingham Drive, sidewalk on south side of 3rd Street between Collicello Street to Stuart Street, sidewalk on east side of Stuart Street, sidewalks on both sides of Virginia Avenue from about 2nd Street to 5th Street. Estimate cost: >\$500,000. Funded by VDOT SRTS Program and city funds.
 - UPDATE: Engineering design continues by city staff. Right of way negotiations has not yet started. Project construction anticipated to begin in Spring 2012.
- Trail Locator System Signage - City staff from Public Works, Parks & Rec, Fire, Police, Emergency Communications Center, IT, etc. working on a system for emergency locator signage for existing and new trails.
 - UPDATE: Staff has developed concepts for locator signage at Rocktown Trails and is currently reviewing them in consultation with Rich Edwards. This signage at Rocktown Trails will be adapted for use on other trails throughout the city.
- *University Boulevard Sidewalks – Construct sidewalks on University Boulevard (location of sidewalks yet to be determined). This project would be funded by the City.*
 - *UPDATE: Public Works and City engineering division are evaluating the feasibility of the project and working on cost estimates to determine what portions of the project can be funded now.*

You're Invited!



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROJECT DEDICATION

Please join us to celebrate the completion of our first Safe Routes to School project in Harrisonburg.

New sidewalks and pedestrian signals have been added around Keister Elementary School, providing students and their families a safer opportunity to walk to school.

Date & Time : Friday June 3, 2011 at 8:45am

Location: Keister Elementary School. Gather behind the school between the walking track and building.

Inclement weather plan: school cafeteria. Additional parking is available at the Fire Station and Harrisonburg Church of Christ.

This event is open to the public.

Questions? Contact Thanh Dang, 434-5928 or thanh.dang@harrisonburgva.gov

